

Obituary

Dr Arthur "Red" Evans

Arthur Evans, who died on 6 April, aged 84, was always known as Red; one never dared call him Arthur. His father was the principal of a theological college in south London and it was not surprising that his son should go into medicine. After education at Selhurst Grammar School for Boys, where he distinguished himself at rugby, he trained at the Middlesex Hospital beginning in October 1935. Because of the war, students at the time were encouraged to take the conjoint diploma so that they could start work for one of the armed services before taking the London MB. By the time he finished he was working as a junior resident assistant anaesthetist. Between February and August 1940 he was a house physician and worked with Dr T Isod Bennett, and he then moved with Dr Bennett to Stoke Mandeville until he joined the Royal Navy in 1941. Dr Bennett's letter of recommendation expressed the hope that "he be given the opportunity of passing his higher medical examinations as I am convinced that he gives promise of a most useful career," a prophesy which was certainly going to come true.

His early shipboard career was followed by service on the Isle of Man where he worked in a prisoner of war camp. He then was moved to the Naval Hospital in Simonstown, South Africa, where the anaesthetists ran the genitourinary medicine department, and there he developed his affection for genitourinary medicine, or venereology as it was in those days.

He left the navy in 1946 and joined the Colonial Service and was sent to northern Rhodesia as a medical officer from 1946 to December 1950. While there he was running the Ba Ila campaign which was trying to redress the reduction in the population arising from infertility. In the early 1990s a historian called Tom Johnson was researching social and environmental history in the region and afterwards he wrote to Dr Evans "all the men and women I interviewed remembered or have heard of you, and they consistently expressed gratitude for the very good thing that you have done in helping them" and in a later letter "I will be writing to friends in Nam Walla and will mention that I have heard from you. All Ba Ila will be delighted to hear news of you."

In 1950 he was appointed a specialist and stayed in northern Rhodesia until he was transferred to the western region of Nigeria as a specialist in dermatology and venereology. While working in Ibadan he had a joint appointment with the university where he lectured in dermatology.

In 1959 he retired from the Colonial Service and took an appointment at St Thomas's Hospital in the Lydia Ward. He also did clinics at University College Hospital on Saturday mornings and then acted as a part time consultant in Aldershot and Guildford. During that time he wrote an MD thesis on gonorrhoea.

In 1966 he moved to Plymouth to a post which included Torquay and Exeter, and I first met him in 1973. He was the sort of consultant that most people would really wish to have as a colleague/mentor on first appointment. After I came to know him better he told me that he really didn't want a colleague but the doctor who used to do his locum had passed the age of 70 and the regional hospital board had made it very clear that he either had a colleague or no more leave. I can only say how fortunate I was to have had a colleague like him. He was a keen golfer and was still playing until shortly before his death.

In 1974 he hosted the spring meeting and was very glad that Dr Fluker had chosen Plymouth because of Dr Fluker's association with the navy and the fact that Dr Fluker had learned venereology from his time working in Plymouth. He was elected a member of the society's council between 1978 and 1981. After his retirement in 1980 he was very pleased indeed to be allowed to work as a consultant for the navy at HMS Drake where he did two sessions a week until 1995 when he decided he would retire. His wife predeceased him by some 18 months and he is survived by two sons. I just regard it as a pleasure and an honour to have worked with him.

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